in the shock of April 18, 1906, and the duration was much less but the motion was more violent.

Fortunately the telescopes and other instruments of the observatory suffered no injury, with the exception of the Riefler clock. The steel springs in the pendulum support of this clock were broken, allowing the pendulum to fall and break the airtight glass case. The 36-inch telescope was moved about three-quarters of an inch to the south, the great base plate slipping on the masonry pier. The telescope was put into position again promptly and without difficulty and has suffered no harm whatever.—

Prof. R. G. Aitken, Acting Director, Lick Observatory.

NOTES ON THE RIVERS OF THE SACRAMENTO AND SAN JOAQUIN WATERSHEDS.

By N. R. TAYLOR, Local Forecaster.

SACRAMENTO WATERSHED.

There was a gradual diminution in the run-off of all streams in this watershed during the month, but all of the important watercourses carried more water than for any corresponding month during the past five years.

In the Sacramento River, above Red Bluff, there was only a slight range between the highest and lowest stages of the month, and in many of the reaches above Redding the river was practically stationary during the last half of the month. From Knights Landing, however, to the tide limits the difference between the stages of the 1st and those of the 31st of the month were more or less marked.

In the Feather-Yuba territory the rivers averaged from 2 to 2.5 feet higher than during the preceding July, and the Yuba River at Marysville was higher than in any July

since 1907.

The American River averaged about 1 foot above the usual July stage and was the highest for any like month since 1907. It receded gradually from the 1st to the 31st with a range of 3 feet.

SAN JOAQUIN WATERSHED.

Except the Stanislaus, Mokelumne, and the San Joaquin, in the vicinity of Lathrop, all rivers in this watershed carried more water than for any July since the establishment of Weather Bureau gaging stations in the San Joaquin Valley. The San Joaquin in the vicinity of Firebaugh and Mendota continued above the flood stage until the 8th, but fell rapidly after this date and by the last of the month had fallen nearly 6 feet. Some lands in the vicinity of Mendota were flooded, but all interests were amply protected by the river forecasts from day to day.

PRECIPITATION AND ALTITUDE IN THE SIERRA.

By Mr. CHARLES H. LEF.

Note.—This article is published by courtesy of the editor of the Journal of Electricity, Power, and Gas. Mr. Lee, as one of the engineering staff of the Los Angeles Aqueduct, has carried on extensive measurements of rainfall and depth of snow on the eastern side of the high Sierra, in Inyo County, in the watershed of the Owens River. Mr. Lee has been in touch with the Weather Bureau throughout the period covered by these measurements and has in every way tried to further its work.

Precipitation studies made by the Los Angeles Aqueduct officials in connection with a general investigation of water supply conditions in the Owens Valley have led to some interesting results regarding the relation of precipitation and altitude in the Sierra Nevada. The portion of the range considered extends from Lake Tahoe to the

Mojave Desert. Data gathered and published by the United States Weather Bureau were used where available and were supplemented on the east slope of the Sierra adjacent to the Owens Valley with records kept by the aqueduct officials. The investigations were carried on by the writer under the direction of William Mulholland, chief engineer of the Lee Angeles Aqueduct

chief engineer of the Los Angeles Aqueduct.

The phenomenon of increase of precipitation with altitude is fully recognized by hydraulic engineers who have had occasion to investigate the subject of precipitation. As a basis for engineering computations the relation is often assumed to be a simple ratio, which may be applied without regard to any factor but difference of elevation. As a matter of fact, however, topography, prevailing winds, latitude, and conditions of the atmosphere have a marked effect upon the geographic distribution of rainfall as well as altitude. The straight line relation, even when used as a convenient approximation, has a limited use, and should not be employed indiscriminately, as is shown by the studies herewith presented.

The general area within which precipitation data were considered is shown by the accompanying map. Upon this are indicated the principal rivers and their drainage area, stream gaging and precipitation stations, and isohyets or lines of equal annual rainfall. The isohyets are those of the Water and Forest Association as amended in 1908 by Edwin Duryea, jr. The dotted isohyets in the southeastern portion of the area are revisions proposed by the writer, based on all data available to date. The southern and eastern extension of the 30-inch and 20-inch isohyets is the most radical change, and is justified by the

aqueduct observations in Owens Valley.

The relations of precipitation and topography are shown in a general manner by the position of the isohyets. A more instructive method is by graphical study of observations made in and near cross sections of the Sierra, laid out at right angles to the trend of the range. Five such were chosen and are shown on the map as the Central Pacific, Mokelumne, Taboose, Oak, and Bairs sections. There are sufficient observations taken along the two most northerly of these to indicate the relations upon both slopes of the range, but records applying to the three southerly sections are confined to the east slope.

A list of stations along the Central Pacific and Mokelumne sections is given in Table 1, together with elevation, distance from the Great Valley, length of record, observed and computed mean seasonal precipitations, and observed precipitations during the season 1909-10. The stations selected were all within 12 miles of the sections, and their elevations were such that they lay in the average profile (See diagrams 3 and 6.) Of stations of ground surface. in the Central Pacific group, Sacramento, Newcastle, Iowa Hill, Reno (1888-89 to 1909-10) and Wadsworth (1890-91 to 1909-10) are maintained by the Weather Bureau. Observations at other stations are made by agents of the Southern Pacific Co. Stations in the Mokelumne group are all maintained by the Weather Bureau. Ele-vations are those published in Weather Bureau reports, and where possible were compared with those given on Government topographic sheets. Distances from the Great Valley were scaled from the Government topographic or from the general land office map of California. Observed mean seasonal precipitation was computed for the season, September 1 to August 31. The observed means are for periods of differing length, and to obtain values more strictly comparable the records were computed so as to apply to a single definite period. That selected for the Central Pacific group extended over the 40 seasons, 1870-71 to 1909-10; and for the Mokelumne group, the 28 seasons, 1882-83 to 1909-10. The method of correcting a short record was the common one of comparison with an adjacent station having a complete record.

Stations in the Taboose, Oak, and Bairs groups were established and maintained by the aqueduct officials. They are listed on Table 3 with elevation, distance from the Sierra crest, with observed and computed mean seasonal precipitation. The gages were located on or near the sections at the approximate crossings of 500foot contours. The immediate surroundings were selected with respect to accessibility from roads and trails, and the recognized requirements for good exposure were observed. The highest level on the slope of the Sierra which can be reached from the Owens Valley after the winter snowstorms is approximately the 6,500-foot contour. Gages were distributed between this contour and the valley floor, which, near Independence, has an average elevation of 3,800 feet. The type of gage used was the ordinary 8-inch cylindrical gage of the Weather Bureau. The funnel-shape receiver, however, was dispensed with, so that the catch fell directly into the 8-inch cylinder. The mounted observer carried the inner tube and cedar measuring stick and poured the catch from the container into the small tube for measuring. Snow was reduced to equivalent water by weighing the catch with a spring balance. The gages were visited after each storm, an observer being detailed to each group, and snowshoes were part of the necessary equipment in winter. The exact elevation and location of the gages were determined by ordinary engineering methods. Distances from the Sierra crest were scaled from the Mount Whitney quadrangle of the United States Geological Survey. The 26-year record at Independence, which was used as a basis for computing long-term means, is given in Table 4. The portion of this record from September, 1866, to August, 1877, was obtained under the direction of United States Army officers stationed at Fort Independence, and under conditions sufficiently similar to permit of its being combined with the more recent Weather Bureau record at the present town of Independence.

The relations of precipitation, altitude, and topographic position, and also profiles of ground surface, are based on United States Geological Survey topographic maps and are shown for each of the accompanying charts. The values represented by numbered points are those given in Tables 1, 2, and 3. The points at the upper end of curves for Taboose, Oak, and Bairs sections need further explanation, however. As previously noted, it was not practical to make complete precipitation observations above the 6,500-foot contour in Owens Valley. An attempt has been made, however, to arrive at approximate values for precipitation along the adjacent Sierra crest from computations based on measured stream flow. Data available were the true run-off from the east slope of the Sierra, measured at mouths of canyons, and an approximate value of the run-off factor. The mean seasonal discharge per square mile of mountain drainage areas crossed by the Taboose and Oak sections is 1.75 second-feet, and by the Bairs section, 1.36 second-feet. The run-off factor for Kings River, which is adjacent to Owens Valley drainage on the west, is 0.59. Computations for the latter are based on the isohyets of Plate 1; observed variation in precipitation at Merced, Fresno, Sanger, Selma, Visalia, and Summerdale, and the discharge measurements of Kings River at Red Mountain, covering 20 seasons. Run-off factors for the small drainage areas tributary to Owens Valley are probably larger than for Kings River, for the following reasons: The greater average elevation of drainage areas tributary to Owens Valley; nonporous character of the granite bedrock; the universal occurrence of deep cirques and canyons which favor the collection of snow in protected drifts; the snow dust carried over the Sierra crest into the cirque basins by prevailing west and northwest winds; and the absence of lake surfaces or extensive areas supporting vegetation. All of these characteristics tend to make the run-off greater than for Kings River by decreasing evaporation and percolation losses. A value of 0.75 is thought to correctly represent run-off conditions for the Owens Valley streams.

TABLE 1.—DESCRIPTION AND MEAN PRECIPITATION FOR STATIONS IN CENTRAL PACIFIC GROUP.

gage.		Til	 Distance		Observed	Computed mean seasonal pr	Observed		
No. of g	Station,	Elevation above sea level.	Distance from Sac- ramento.	Length of record years.	mean sea- sonal pre- cipitation.	Base station.	Number of years cov- ered.	Precipita- tion.	precipita- tion, 1909–10.
		Fcet.	Milcs.		Inches.			Inches.	Inches.
1	Sacramento			61	19.50	Sacramento	i 40 i	19.36	12. 18
2	Rocklin	249	18.9	8	28.45	Auburn		24.65	21.06
3	New Castle	956	26.3	15	32.32	dodo.	40	28, 20	26, 92
4	Auburn	1,363	30.0	40	34. 93	do	40	34. 93	36, 12
5	Colfax	2,421	42.1	40	49.01	Colfax	40	49.01	49.69
6	Iowa Hill	2,825	46.8	31	52.64	do	40	50.53	50.68
7	Gold Run	3, 222	48.8	11	54, 49	Alta-Towle	40	43.05	48.34
8	Towle (Alta)	3,612	52.8	40	49. 15	do		49.15	53.02
9	Blue Canyoa.	4,695		11	72.82	do	40	57.55	64.11
10	Emigrant Gap	5, 230	61.7	30	53.50		40	54.50	56.28
11	Cisco	5,939	67. 9	40	51.96			51.96	58.85
12	Summit	7,017	78.6	39	48.00		40	47. 60	37.00
13	Truckee	5,820	85. S	39	27.65	Truckee		27.65	25.01
14	Boca.	5, 531	92.0	38	20.47	Boca		20.47	25.93
15	Reno.	4, 484	110. 1	39	7.05	Reno		7.05	7. 52
16	Wadsworth (Fernley)	4,084	138. 4	35	4. 59	Wadsworth	35	4. 59	5. 17

Stations 1 to 12, inclusive, seasonal totals (Sept. 1 to Aug. 31). Stations 13 to 16, inclusive, calendar year totals, except last column.

 $^{^{\}rm I}$ The editor is under the impression that this is the Marvin density bucket, which was furnished to Mr. Lee by the San Francisco office.

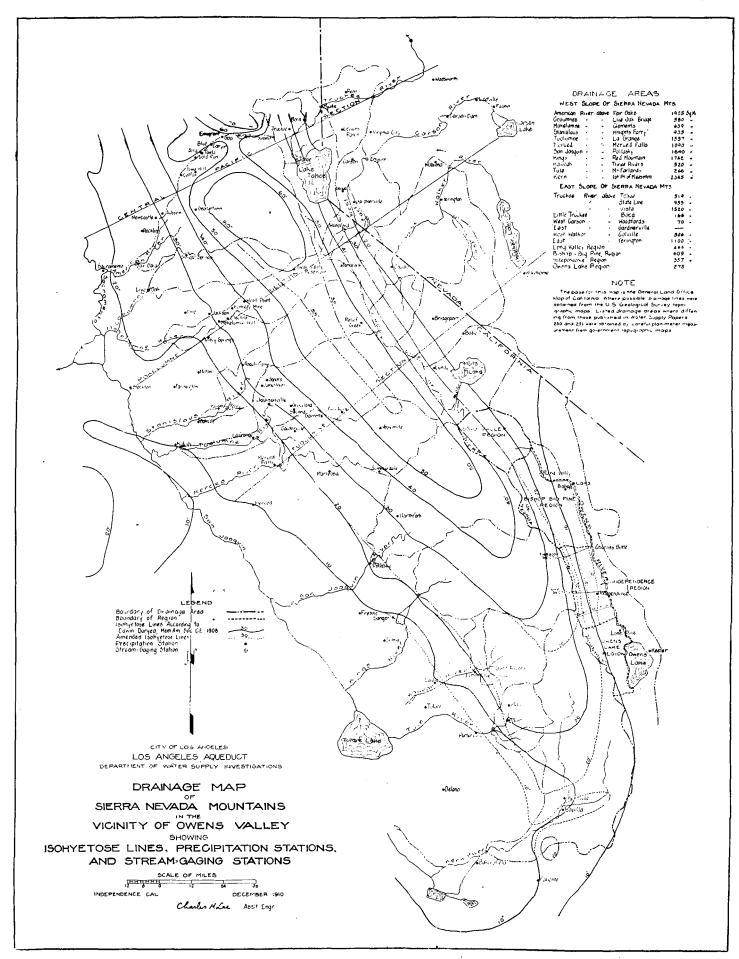


TABLE 2.—DESCRIPTION AND MEAN PRECIPITATION FOR STATIONS IN MOKELUMNE GROUP.

		Elevation	Distance	Tourth of	Observed	Computed mean seasonal pred		Observed	
No. of	Station.	above sea level.	from Stockton.	Length of trecord years.	mean sea- sonal pre- cipitation.	Base station.	Number of years cov- ered.	Precipita- tion.	precipita- tion, 1909-10.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	Stockton. Farmington Lone. Valley Springs Jackson. Mokelumne Hill West Point Bear Valley Reservoir Tamarack. Gardnerville Wabuska	2,800	13. 0 33. 0 31. 2 40. 0 41. 0 52. 8 72. 5 89. 5 108. 5	80 33 32 22 20 28 16 7 11	57.23	Stockton. Farmington Forse. Stockton Jackson Mokelumne Hill do do do do do	28 28 28 20 18 28 28 28 28	Inches. 14. 82 16. 73 21. 33 24. 18 33. 19 32. 33 41. 15 57. 65 54. 73 9. 08	Inches. 13. 81 15. 91 20. 39 23. 28 25. 56 48. 94 16. 57 3. 49

TABLE 3.—PRECIPITATION STATIONS IN OWEN VALLEY.

No. of gage.	Group.		Distance from crest of Sierra Nevada Mountains.	Observed pre	Computed mean seasonal precipitation	
	Gloup.			Season 19 08 -9.	Season 1909-10.	based on 26- year record at Independence.
2 3 4 5 6 18 17 7 8 8A 9 10 11 12	Taboose	4,460 5,040 5,550 6,190	Miles. 8. 1 6. 9 5. 5 4. 7 4. 2 13. 8 12. 5 9. 6 8. 4 8. 0 6. 6 5. 7 4. 8 10. 2	9. 09 10. 40 11. 74 16. 53 23. 24 7. 22 9. 24 11. 35 14. 47 21. 04 4. 28	6. 65 7. 61 8. 69 9. 26 12. 94 3. 15 4. 25 4. 45 5. 27 6. 42 7. 67 10. 19 3. 74	6. 56 7. 51 8. 53 10. 48 14. 69 3. 25 4. 38 4. 78 6. 37 5. 43 7. 22 8. 94 12. 51
13 14 15 16	do	4,500 5,000	9. 0 7. 7 6. 6 5. 7	6. 09 7. 63 11. 67 14. 34	3. 63 5. 34 5. 94 7. 24	3. 97 5. 38 7. 08 8. 68

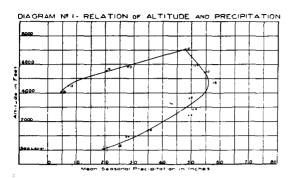
. TABLE 4.—PRECIPITATION, IN INCHES, AT INDEPENDENCE, CAL.

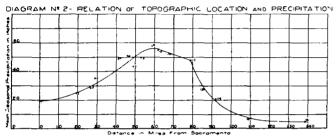
1865–1877, United States War Department, Fort Independence. Elevation, 3,930 feet. 1832–1895 and 1893–1910, United States Weather Bureau, Independence. Elevation, 3,920 feet.

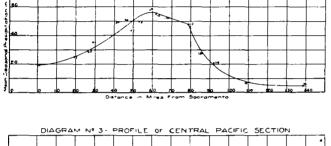
Season.	Septem- ber.	October.	Novem- ber.	Decem- ber.	January.	February.	March.	April.	May.	June.	July.	August.	Total.
.865–66		32	0	. 65	2. 42	0	0 4. 76	. 16	.76	0	.01	1, 15	11.4
.867–68	.07	.32	. 21 . 44	12. 19 1. 17	5.46 .16	0	.32	. 40 . 11	. 71 . 36	0	. 10 . 03	0	19. 4 3. 3
869-70 1870-71 1871-72	0 0	1. 10 0	. 14 0 . 65	1.00 4.70	.20	1.36 1.28 .30	$\begin{array}{c} 0 \\ 0 \\ .28 \end{array}$.21 0 .55	. 27 0 . 18	.30	.35 0 .28	.10 0 .12	2. 6 3. 6 7. 0
872–73 	.10 .40	0 0 .80	0 0 . 40	1. 18 3. 40 0	0 2. 40 1. 73	1.00 0	0	0	0	.01	.15	.05	1.6 7.0 3.3
.875–76. 	.01	.26	.66	$.62^{\circ}_{0}$	1. 51 . 76	.70	.87	.59	.69	. 15	. 19	.56	5. 2 2. 4
891-92	T.	.35	. 23	1.61 .75	$\substack{1.51\\.12}$	2.91 .42	. 62 . 98 . 09	.02	T. 96 . 10	. 07 0 . 11	T. . 77 . 12	T. T.	8.3 2.3
1894-95 1895-96 1896-97	T. T.	.83	.67	1.89 .08	1. 24 1. 67	1. 18 0	. 12	Т.	.01	Т,	т.	.04	4.4
.897–98	20	. 0	.10	.20	.54	т.	.01	. 16	.23	T.	T.	.11	1.5
899–1900 900–1901	T. 75	.30	. 85 1. 34	. 56	2.81	. 05	. 67 . 05	T. 62	.22	.04	.08	т. 32	3.7 6.5
901-2 902-3	т. Т.	. 65 . 08 . 42	. 22 . 41 T.	. 06 . 04	. 04 . 71 T.	1.69	1.05 .34	. 17 . 19	T. 02	.01	.17	.13	4. 2 2. 0
903–4	.32 .25	.06	0 . 43	т. Т.	. 54 2. 89	1. 20 . 73 . 13	. 95 2. 08 1. 86	T. T. .36	. 02 . 25 . 42	0 0 . 10	T. 0 .31	T. 07	2.6 3.9 6.7
906-7	0 0 .84	2. 12 .03	т. 02	. 84 . 42 . 20	. 95 1. 63 3. 27	. 56 . 98 2, 73	1.10 .14	T.	T. T.	.55 T. T.	T. . 26	. 46	4. 1 6. 0
908-9 909-10	.07	.03	.01 .19	3.90	3.27	T. 73	. 16 . 10	.12 .31	т. о	0	$\overset{0}{.27}$. 25	7.6 5.1
26-year mean	. 12	. 29	. 25	1.43	1.12	.77	. 61	. 17	. 17	.06	. 12	. 15	5.2

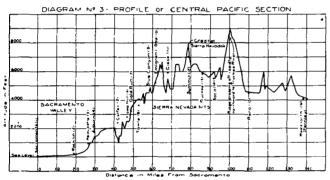
CENTRAL PACIFIC GROUP OF PRECIPITATION GAGES.

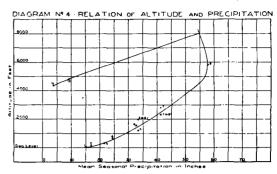
MOKELUMNE GROUP OF PRECIPITATION GAGES.

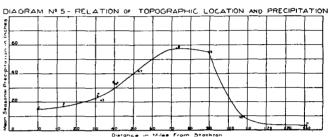


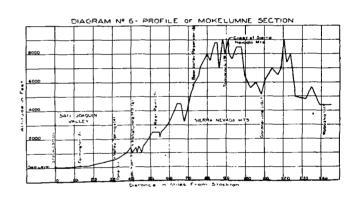




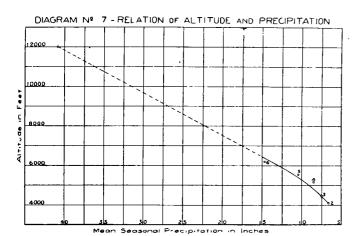


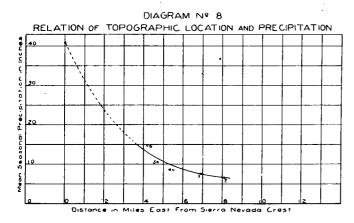


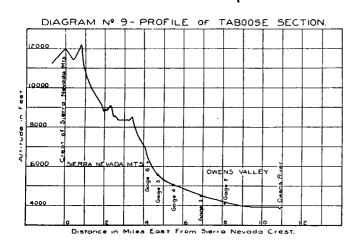




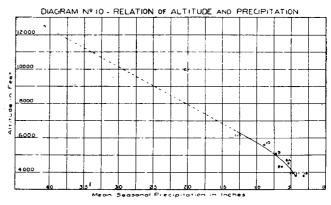
TABOOSE GROUP OF PRECIPITATION GAGES

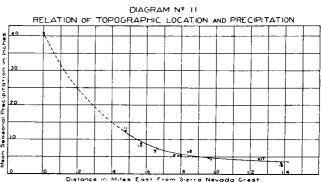


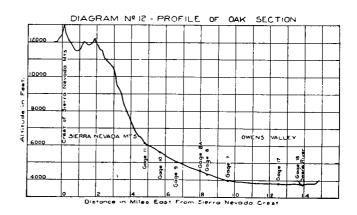




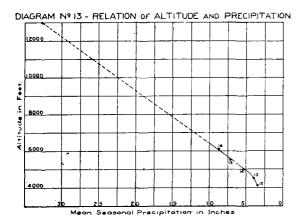
OAK GROUP OF PRECIPITATION GAGES.

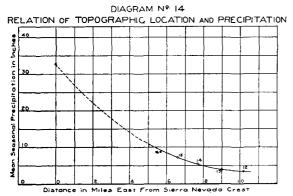


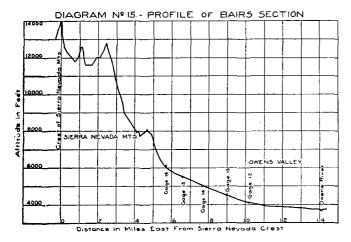




BAIRS GROUP OF PRECIPITATION GAGES.







The shape of many of the mountain drainage areas tributary to the Owens Valley is that of an isosceles triangle with apex at canyon mouth and base lying along the Sierra crest. Measuring from the Sierra crest and assuming a uniform rate of change of precipitation from crest to canyon mouth, as indicated by the observations in the Central Pacific and Mokelumne sections, the average precipitation over one of these triangles equals the true precipitation at one-third the distance between these two points. The observed precipitation at canyon mouths being available, it is therefore a matter of simple proportion to compute that at the crest. The average depth of precipitation over drainage areas having run-off factors of 0.75 and discharges per square mile of 1.75 and 1.36 second-feet is 31.7 and 24.6 inches, respectively. Employing the method of computation outlined

above, the values for precipitation at the Sierra crest are 40.8 inches for the Taboose and Oak sections and 32.7 for the Bairs section. These are the points not numbered on diagrams 7, 8, 10, 11, 13, and 14.

The study of the data presented in Tables 1, 2, and 3 involves a graphical analysis of the relation of: (1) Precipitation to altitude; and (2) horizontal position to precipitation in connection with topography. See diagrams 1, 4, 10, 13 and diagrams 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12, 14 and 15

In general the shape of the curves which fit the platted points is similar throughout each set of diagrams. Examining the precipitation and altitude curves in detail it appears that there is an increase of precipitation with altitude from the floor of the Great Valley up the western slope of the Sierra to about the 5,000-foot level. The rate of increase for this portion of the curve is greatest in the lower foothills and steadily decreases with increase of elevation. Above 5,000 feet there is a moderate decrease in precipitation with increase of altitude, the rate being practically constant.

East of the Sierra crest precipitation decreases rapidly with decrease in altitude, maintaining a constant rate to the 5,000-foot level and a decreasing rate below this elevation. The distance and precipitation curves conform to the profile in general shape, except that their maxima are west of the topographic crest, occupying the same relative position with respect to the Great Valley as the 5,000-foot level. They have a tendency to become horizontal over the level portion of the profile, to rise over western slopes below the 5,000-foot contour, to fall over western slopes above this, and to fall over eastern slopes. In other words, the general slope of the country seems to have more to do with the amount of precipitation than does altitude.

Precipitation upon the plains of northern India and the southern slope of the Himilayas exhibits a similar variation. An empirical equation giving the relation of precipitation and elevation has been developed from observations in that region, as follows: $R=1+1.92\ h-0.40\ h^2+0.02\ h^3$, in which R represents the amount of rain and h the relative height in units of a thousand feet above an assumed plane, which was itself 1,000 feet above sea level. The critical elevation was 4,160 feet above sea level and observations were sufficient to determine that the form of the curve above this elevation was similar to that below, the complete curve approximating a cubic parabola whose axis is the line represented by the critical elevation.

The curves on diagrams 1 and 4 suggest a similar relation for the west slope of the Sierra, with a critical elevation of about 5,000 feet. The relatively low crest of the latter range, however, breaks the relation just above the critical elevation, so that the upper arm of the curve is incomplete and a discontinuity is introduced. The relation of precipitation to elevation upon the Sierra is therefore not unique, but conforms to some general law.

The condition met with is the broad slope of a long mountain range presented to a prevailing moisture-laden wind. The movement of a body of moist air up such a slope results in expansion and cooling of the air. When the temperature reaches the dew point condensation of the aqueous vapor occurs. The latent heat thus liberated tends to warm the air and raises its temperature

¹ Reference should be made to various papers by McAdie and Wilson, in Monthly Weather Review and Climatology of California; also to papers by Lippincott, Clapp, and others in various Water Supply Papers.

above the dew point. The descent on the leeward slope of the range is accompanied by a rapid compression and rising temperature of a body of air. Hence, precipitation is greatest along the lower windward slopes of the Sierra and reaches its maxima at the lower cloud limit, the 5,000-foot contour, decreasing slowly from here to the crest of the range and decreasing rapidly down the leeward slope to the desert. It is, therefore, not increasing elevation alone which causes increase in precipitation; but broad rising slopes which give an upward movement to bodies of moist air driven by prevailing winds.

The conclusions from this study which can be applied

in practical computations are as follows:

1. The precipitation upon the west slope of the Sierra between the Yuba and Tuolumne Rivers increases at a variable rate, which, expressed as an average, is 0.85 inch per hundred-foot rise from the floor of the Great Valley to the 5,000-foot contour.

2. Above the 5,000-foot contour it decreases approximately at the rate of 0.40 inch per hundred-foot rise to

the crest of the Sierra.

3. Precipitation upon the east slope of the Sierra decreases at differing rates, depending upon the elevation of the crest and depth of precipitation at the summit. The rate is constant above the 5,000-foot contour, and for the sections studied is as follows:

Central Pacific, 1.74 inches per hundred foot fall. Mokelumne, 1.43 inches per hundred foot fall. Taboose and Oak, 0.46 inch per hundred foot fall.

Bairs, 0.34 inch per hundred foot fall.

Mr. Fred G. Plummer, in a bulletin on chaparral, No. 85, of the Forest Service, gives the following estimate of the average annual precipitation over the chaparral area in southern California:

At sea level:	13 inches.
At 2,000 feet:	
West and south slopes, 25) East and north slopes, 9)	17 inches.
At 5,000 feet:	
West and south slopes, 43 East and north slopes, 27	05 in al an
East and north slopes, 27	зэ шенев.
At 8,000 feet:	
West and south slopes, 61) East and north slopes, 45	53 inches.
rast and north stopes, 30)	